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ABSTRACT

The advantages and disadvantages of being the spouse of a male college president are considered, along with the roles of the president and his spouse. Attention is directed to the ceremonial role of the president and his wife, on-campus entertaining, travel to speak to groups, the wife's problem of securing adequate help for her social role, the limited public recognition and rewards that accrue to the wife who works on behalf of the college, the personal liabilities of living in the president's house on campus, search procedures for the president and consideration of the wife's qualities, the visit to the campus during the search process, considerations in accepting the position, social and psychological support for the wife, the situation facing the wife of an arrogant president, the strains of the position on the marriage bond, the wife's role in outreach and public relations, the dilemma of voluntary work undertaken by the wife, the wife's involvement with students and staff, the task of transition from one presidential couple to the next, expectations of the new presidential couple, and power/influence and leadership. (SW)

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESIDENT'S SPOUSE: HAZARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

by

David Riesman

Occasional Paper Series
#11

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FOREWORD

"David Riesman is the best informed, most insightful, most interesting commentator on higher education in the United States. And he has no peer in any other nation." This observation by Clark Kerr in the Foreword to David Riesman's 1980 book, On Higher Education: The Academic Enterprise in an Era of Rising Student Consumerism, says it all. David Riesman has himself become an institution through his perceptive and probing analyses of the shifting currents in American higher education. As he pioneered in the 1950s in an understanding of the American character through his The Lonely Crowd, so in more recent times he has led the way in our understanding of the dynamics of higher education. In a very real sense, to study American higher education in the present era is to study the works of David Riesman, most notably Constraint and Variety in American Education, The Academic Revolution, Academic Transformation, Education and Politics at Harvard, and most recently, On Higher Education.

The Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Virginia is honored to acknowledge its respect for David Riesman and is pleased to have the opportunity to present in its Occasional Paper series his observations on the hazards and opportunities endemic in the role of the president's spouse. By peering into this often ignored and misunderstood corner of academic life, David Riesman has illuminated the strains, stresses and valuable services inherent in the "hidden role" of the president's spouse. The pages that follow offer insights and suggestions that demand the attention not only of presidents and their families, but also invite thoughtful responses by trustees, presidential search committees, faculty, and students.

We hope this essay will be given the wide reading it deserves and that, as a consequence, the opportunities of the president's spouse will be made to outweigh the hazards that too often produce tensions in that delicate role.

Jennings L. Wagoner
Professor and Director
Center for the Study of
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April 1982

Some Observations on the President's Spouse: Hazards and Opportunities[1]

David Riesman

I

The word "spouse" in the title refers to the wife of a male President. I shall not be discussing the rare bachelor president, nor (with the exception of some remarks on the Catholic orders) the unmarried woman president. As for the married woman who is a college or university president, I have observed an increasing number of instances of supportive spouses who helped their wives by providing quiet support in times of stress, by joining in official entertaining, and by simply being there as a confidant. I do not know any case where the husband has not had an independent career, sometimes in another locality--a strain on family life especially likely if the college is located in a non-metropolitan area. Whereas in many instances of two-career families the men promise a good game of partnership when it comes to household duties, but develop trained incapacities for these, among the presidential women I know the husbands have been helpful in deed as well as in word, at least in those cases where long-distance commuting is not involved.

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1. This essay has been developed from a paper presented in the 1980 annual meetings of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities which appears in the 1980 Proceedings under the title, "The President's Spouse: The University's Added Dimension" (pp. 15-25). For the support which has made work on this essay possible, I am indebted to the Lilly Endowment and the Spencer Foundation; for helpful comments on an earlier draft, to Nancy Bragdon of Reed College; to Charlotte Sorenson, formerly at Babson College; and to Bruce Kimball, a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Unitarian-Universalist minister. I am especially indebted to Jean Alexander Kemeny for extensive commentary and to her book, It's Different at Dartmouth: A Memoir (Kemeny, 1979).

I am spared the necessity of detailed examination of the pressures on the spouse by the existence of three books, written by women who have played that role, and who are fully aware of many of the pitfalls it contains.[2] For example, these books deal at length with the problem of living in university-provided housing which the institution regards, not as a private home, but as a public utility. Especially in smaller towns, the president's house is frequently the preferred site for extra-academic groups and functions. While new presidents may not generally be expected to follow exactly in the footsteps of their predecessors, the families soon learn that they are expected to make the house available to groups which regarded it as their due under the predecessors' regimes.

I would say that, as a general but by no means invariable rule, the more distinguished the college or university, the less the presidential family is likely to be envied. Distinguished faculty are often apt to regard the president and other administrators as indivividuals who are doing something less important than they are, not fully realizing that their ability to do what they do depends on the facilitating and, at times, buffering role of the administration. However, it is in these distinguished institutions that the president is most likely to become the target of sit-ins and

2. The dilemmas of a house that is not a home are among the many themes beautifully summarized by Marguerite Walker Corbally in her book The Partners: Sharing the Life of a College President (Corbally, 1977). Marguerite Corbally is the wife of the former President of the University of Illinois, a setting with multiple constituencies for which she has a pungent sense. Less systematic but wittily informative is Muriel Beadle's Where Has All the Ivy Gone? (Beadle, 1972). Muriel Beadle moved into the highly visible and accessible President's House at the University of Chicago when her husband, George Beadle, a distinguished scientist, became the President of that institution. Jean Alexander Kemeny, in It's Different at Dartmouth (Kemeny, 1979, pp. 39-59, 146-155), has more to say concerning the hazards of living on campus in the midst of Fraternity Row with ample noise pollution, a product of the hi-fi era and of a general decline in civility.

demonstrations, frightening to all inside the house, but especially to small children. These tactics, which were endemic in the Sixties and early Seventies, have by no means disappeared and are likely to surface over different issues, such as sudden and steep rises in tuition or cuts in library hours or the alleged "firing" of a faculty member not on tenure who is a popular teacher and has courted a constituency as a radical and/or a feminist and/or a leader in minority affairs.[3]

I recall visiting a few years ago a Southern University which regarded itself as on the road to becoming a nationally recognized research university, potentially a member of the small "club" of the Association of American Universities. The faculty treated with such envy and spite the presidential mansion with its swimming pool and tennis court that it was clear to me that the institution was very far indeed from its Avis-like ambitions. No scholarly and fully occupied faculty would spend such energy in envying the highly visible home and recreational facilities of a president who, like other administrators, worked at least an eleven-month year, broken only by occasional trips to meetings of the American Council on Education or other professional bodies. Even on such trips the president is subject to state-wide budgetary controls for out-of-state travel, particularly the essential out-of-state travel which would permit husband and wife to have a chance to be alone together in contrast to the seemingly endless

3. When a faculty member is released in accordance with contract, and not given tenure, the term almost invariable used by her or his supporters is that the person has been "fired." I have called the attention of many student journalists and other often cynical yet gullible protesters to Mary McCarthy's wondrous novel, The Groves of Academe (1952) in which a professor at a liberal college who is about to be released declares himself a Communist in order to save his job.

round of occasions at which both are entertaining or being entertained at some university or community function for which their presence is deemed requisite.

The United States lacks the division of labor that is provided in the United Kingdom between the royal family, which attends to ceremonial duties, and the Prime Minister, who can stick to the usually grim business in hand. We turn our nation's presidents into at once ceremonial and functional figures, performing in dual and endlessly tiring roles. To a lesser extent, state governors and other highly visible political leaders are in the same position as college and university presidents, particularly when the latter serve in residential settings, and especially in smaller communities. We are too egalitarian to create an aristocracy to perform these tasks on behalf of the busier members of the population. Indeed, just because we are egalitarian, we expect a presidential couple to behave "just like folks" and at the same time, to rise above the level of the folks. If one doubts the importance of the ceremonial role, consider the position of the president of a leading sports power in the South or the Midwest or Southwest who fails to show up, along with the governor and the regents, at the big football game, whether with an out-of-state rival or the neighboring land-grant or flagship campus as the case may be. (I am sometimes inclined to believe that these ceremonials loom so large because, in a fragmented society such as America, they are a part of the glue that keeps communities together to the degree that they are kept together.)

Jean Alexander Kemeny, in It's Different at Dartmouth (Kemeny, 1979), makes clear not only that Dartmouth is different but that she is different: she is more outspoken, periodically more acerbic, surely wittier than most

presidential spouses have been. No book has more to say concerning the endless round of on-campus entertaining, which Jean Kemeny handled with an assertive informality, and also about the incessant travel to speak to alumni clubs and other relevant groups throughout the United States and overseas. Concerning the vicissitudes and wear and tear of travel, Jean Kemeny is marvelously cogent. However, she also recognized how all important is the marital bond of presidential partners and reports the satisfactions inherent in the role of a president's spouse, such as meeting interesting as well as distinguished visitors, responsive trustees and their spouses, and Dartmouth's forte of dedicated alumni.

These books deal with the difficulty the president's wife has in securing adequate help for the social role into which the president's house casts her. Will she have a private secretary? What kinds of housekeeping help will she have? In fact, what kind of shape will the house be in--especially if there has been an interim president who has lived in his or her own home while the search was going on, and the presidential house, already showing signs of wear and tear, has fallen further into disrepair? Marguerite Corbally's book and writings by other spouses (e.g., Claire Mackey's comments, "Pressures on the President's Family," on her experience as reported in the AASCU Proceedings of 1979) indicate the difficulties of tact encountered when the president's wife makes requests of buildings and grounds, or of her husband's secretaries if she herself has none. Aware of the resentment aroused by what seem to be commands from someone not in the direct line of authority, some wives recommend that the requests go through the president himself, but that may put him in an awkward situation. (Jean Kemeny reports no difficulties on this score.)

Many presidential spouses have fallen into their roles quite unexpectedly, and only later have discovered how much they might have learned from The Partners. Wives may find comfort in realizing they are not alone in being confronted with mistrust when they have sought to be helpful, or when they were regarded as not helpful enough. The sheer capacity of the tasks they face may wear them down, not the least of which is sharing the loneliness that is a characteristic phenomenon among college and university presidents. Loneliness is a factor, on top of near-continuous expectations and pressures, in the phenomenon of burnout that is increasingly discussed among presidents (see, Vaughan, 1982). Drawing on her own experience, Nadine Skotheim (Mrs. Richard Skotheim) notes that the president's wife can also suffer from burnout, as well as from alternating periods of intense activity and, for example, during a January interim, sudden quiet, both alien to one's personal rhythm. (Skotheim, 1982) Nadine Skotheim recounts the experience of a spouse who asked a member of the board of trustees how he would feel if she decided to go out and get another job; when the trustee responded, not by saying "We need you," but "Why the hell should I care?" she was shaken, and when she received a nearly identical answer from other trustees, she began to look for another job (personal communication, 1982). These trustees may have been inhibited by some notion of what the proper feminist would expect, but even so they appear insensitive. Indeed, it is a rare occurrence when spouses receive a modicum of the public recognitions and rewards that accompany a president regarded as successful, in part precisely because of his partner. (The Dartmouth Board of Trustees voted to bestow an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, on Jean Alexander Kemeny at Commencement in 1981.)

Before we leave the subject of the house it is worth pointing out that, ever since these books were written, it has become clear in many parts of the country that to be given a residence can be a long-run liability. In an era of rising and inflated real estate prices and high interest rates, the presidential family may be stuck in a house without building up the equity they would have were they given money to support payments on a condominium, or assistance, if they have sold an earlier dwelling, to buy one and therefore not pay capital gains tax. Indeed, I know presidential couples who are aware that they hold the place they live in "at the pleasure of the board," and that if they were released, not having built up any pension or having any arrangement for tenure at the institution (such as the SUNY system provides for its incumbent presidents), they would be left homeless, perhaps with two or more children in college or of college age. It is issues of this sort, of a practical nature, to which trustees should be attentive but rarely are, and where the wife may first play a part in helping her husband decide whether or not to accept the offer of a presidency.

II

Search Procedures

I have been studying search procedures for academic executive positions for some time, as well as working in earlier years with the American Council on Education's annual Institute for College and University Presidents (and spouses), and spending time with both groups, jointly and severally. Searches must today be in some fashion public, in the sense of advertising the position, but the degree of confidentiality varies enormousl/, from the ability of a private university to limit, if not always to prevent, leaks as

to potential candidates, to the kind of open hunting season provided in many state colleges and universities by "sunshine laws," and the requirement that all transactions be open to any inquisitive person.

In recent years, I have observed a certain hesitation on the part of search committees, and the boards of trustees which may make up a part of a search committee and quite frequently contribute the person who chairs the committee, to inquire closely into the qualities of a spouse. This is not because these qualities are unimportant; much of this essay is devoted to indicating how significant the spouses' contributions can be, as well as indicating instances where they can do a comparable amount of damage to their husbands' prospects in a presidency. Some search committees seem to believe that to inquire about the spouse is, if not actually a violation of Affirmative Action regulations, an obvious form of sexism, since what the institution is doing is seeking a one-position, two-person acquisition, in which only marginal recompense in the form of some ancillary services--and not always even these--are provided for the wife.[4] The Minnesota State

4. The "Candidate Description" for the Swarthmore College presidential search concludes with the statement, "While an individual should show willingness to accommodate his or her life to the needs of the College, equivalent spouse commitment is not a pre-requisite, as the College is prepared to make necessary arrangements to support the President's social responsibilities." Paradoxically, the Swarthmore College Bulletin (Smith, 1981, pp. 12-18) carries an article entitled "Elizabeth," in which Charles C. Price, of Swarthmore's Board of Managers, declares: "[Elizabeth Friend's] involvement with the social life of the campus is terrible important--her work with the Penguin and other organizations, for instance. These are useful in their own right, of course, but they are invaluable to the president. Her liveliness is a great asset; her easy way of talking to all sorts of people helps the president to sense the spirit of the campus. A cooler, more reserved person would not be so effective." Boyd T. Barnard (Swarthmore '17), emeritus member of the Board of Managers, declares: "The wife of the president has a difficult job, and a most important one, and it can, in many ways, make or break the presidency. But no matter how you want to define the position, Elizabeth fulfills its obligations perfectly." Elizabeth Pierson Friend is herself a scholar, teacher, poet, and artist. The incoming Dean of the College, Janet Dickerson, notes how

College and University System no longer brings the wives of male candidates to a campus or to an interview with members of the search committee; in one case, a wife who wanted to see the campus was simply told that she could rent a car and drive there. Again, the seeming indifference to the spouse may reflect what I regard as mistaken inhibitions arising out of the women's movements, with a consequent failure to give proper recognition to the roles of the spouse as volunteer.

I consider such hesitations understandable but mistaken. The least part of it is that the kind of person the prospective president has married says something about him, and the way the partners relate to each other says more still about them both.[5] Even if a search is kept confidential up to

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Mrs. Friend can manage her activities, for example, keeping careful records of guests and seating charts. (I regard such traditional but now often deprecated hosting as admirable [cf. Riesman, Watson, Potter, 1960].) Dean Dickerson states: "She does things in a traditional way, but she is not a traditional woman. She puts her own signature, like an artist, on her clothes, her parties, her activities. She has a style that's entirely her own" [pp. 13-14]. Mrs. Friend is not the only presidential spouse who has had to suppress an earlier fear of flying whom I have encountered in person or print; Jean Kemeny describes her anxieties as well as the exhaustions of jet lag and overfilled schedules (Kemeny, 1979, pp. 124-134).

5. Contrary to the assumption given widespread publicity by William H. Whyte, Jr.'s discussion of "the wives of management" in The Organization Man (Simon & Schuster, 1956) in which he argued that the wife of a corporate executive had to toe the corporate line, there is relatively little control of or interest in the wives of managers of large corporations. Exceptions must be made for managers of plants located in small communities, where the spouse of the still generally male manager may be involved in local public relations and entertainment as well as in providing support for top-level employees and their spouses who may feel marooned in the area. However, in most instances, the wives of managers are not called upon to fulfill the function of entertainment or community relations for the company (in this respect, at any rate, our corporations resemble the more productive and harmonious Japanese business enterprises), and it is not a serious problem for a male corporate executive if his wife has a career of her own except insofar as this career may inhibit his horizontal mobility and hence his chances for vertical promotion--an issue which is shared with the family of the college president, who may not be ready to move to another institution

the point at which candidates regarded as unsuitable have been eliminated, while others have eliminated themselves from consideration, there comes a point at which perhaps two or three finalists will be brought to the campus under the auspices of the search committees so that faculty members, academic middle management and staff, and in an increasing number of institutions, students (all of whom may be in a formal sense represented on the search committee itself) have an opportunity to see the candidate and his wife in person rather than through letters of recommendation or the findings of a professional search consultation service.

This visit is apt to be at once one of the most awkward and the most important in the search procedure. The couple may find themselves from morning to night without a chance to talk to one another, sometimes meeting the same people and sometimes different ones. (The wife may be invited to meet with a group of faculty wives, and it is likely that she will have an opportunity to examine the president's home if the institution provides one, or the local real estate possibilities if none is provided; if there are children of school age, she may also be driven about to get a sense of the available local school possibilities, or taken to see the local art museum on the sometimes fallacious assumption that she will have more interest in cultural affairs than her ambitious husband.) But they may also be in situations together where she is often able to observe her husband being grilled by skeptical or querulous faculty and/or antagonistic students.

Some subtle issues of mutuality and candor enter at this point. The

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at the time when this would be optimal for him. A corporation might be hesitant about employing an executive whose wife was known to be an alcoholic, but in the desperate struggle for capable business executives, they would not hesitate to recruit a talented prospective manager because his wife lacked social graces.

wife may not want to move, and may realize that this reservation could perhaps bias her assessment of the institution. On the one hand, the wife may have better judgment concerning how both her husband and herself will be able to cope if the position is offered and accepted. On the other hand, the spouse does not want to hold back her husband, but wants to further his career. Yet she has to think not only of herself and her husband, but also of their children. (Surveys show that the average age of presidents is declining, implying that more of the children, although perhaps fewer in number, are likely to be of school age.) Even to move from one college or university to another means a drastic change in their mode of life: change of house, of style, of friends, of networks of all kinds. If she has a profession or part-time career of her own, this may mean a disruption that will be very serious for her. At the meetings with search committees and, in final stages, perhaps with other groups and parties, her loyalty to her husband will induce her to put on the best show she can, suppressing lurking doubts.

The spouse must be a keen observer, preparing herself to help her husband evaluate this new position. In order to do this, she must also know her husband well. The reverse, of course, is also true, where it is the woman who is a candidate for a presidency and where she may have a husband who accompanies her in the final round of meetings. He might, in his role as spouse, be a very keen observer, although probably less involved than a woman spouse. A male spouse is not so carefully scrutinized as a female spouse. Little will be expected of him, other than a fairly low profile and perhaps occasional ceremonial appearances. (As Gail Thain Parker discovered, a woman president cannot be blatantly unfaithful even in an

aggressively liberal, liberal arts college [cf. Parker, 1979], but adulterous male spouses are even today less problematic.)

Where, as is the far more frequent case, it is the husband who is the candidate, the wife knows she is being looked over but not with such close attention as her husband. This may give her an opportunity to observe nuances of the setting that may escape her husband. Those who get to be college and university presidents are generally ambitious strivers; in many cases, they have been upwardly mobile socially as a consequence of their occupational advancement. As presidential partners, the couple thus may be moving in circles to which they are not accustomed. The situation for both partners calls for adaptability, for quick understanding of a new setting, and for insight.

It has been my experience in observing search procedures that women are more inclined to think in long-run, system-oriented terms than men are. When men find a plausible candidate, they often want to get the anxiety-provoking and time-consuming affair over with, whereas women on a search committee, usually shyer in expressing themselves, are sometimes more apt to think ahead as to what this person may be like in ten years and how the candidate will wear as an incumbent.[6]

6. Women trustees, especially of an older generation, not themselves active in careers, are sometimes inclined in my limited observation to be shy about expressing views against dogmatic and overbearing male members of the search committee. The latter seem to know more about budgetary issues, cash flows, etc. I have informally suggested to the Association of Governing Boards that workshops especially geared to women trustees would be helpful in giving them enough knowledge of what are not too complicated matters of accounting and the budget-making process to help them overcome their diffidence in expressing reservations about candidates and putting forward assessments based on surmises concerning the long-run future. One could put the matter a bit differently and say that women who have presided over a family have had to think about long-run implications for the future of their children, of their neighborhood, of their own actuarially likely widowhood, while their

When the partners have an opportunity, but very little time, in which to decide whether to accept a position if offered, the spouse's ability at observation of both the candidate and the setting come into active play. A wife may realize her husband's restlessness, leading him to jump; or his fears, leading to undue hesitation. But during all this process, the search committee and the trustees have generally paid little attention to the needs of the candidate's spouse, who is not likely to want to bring her questions forward when the decision has not yet been made as to whether the position will in fact be offered. However, presidential candidates' wives have been advised by Marguerite Walker Corbally and others to make a detailed inquiry at that point as to what provisions will be made for them; whether, for example, they are to be expected to act as hostess for institutional and local functions, and whether they are expected to run both a president's home and a public facility for the university. I do not believe it is humanly feasible for a wife to bargain in this fashion at the same time that her husband is concluding negotiations with a board of trustees. Recognizing this disability, Charlotte Sorenson, wife of the former President of Babson College, wrote a memorandum to the Board of Trustees as to the issues which should be considered with respect to a prospective candidate's spouse. Because Babson is a college oriented to business management, the likelihood

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menfolk were engrossed in the dailiness of life. In other words, the wives are more prepared to think in system-oriented terms, though they are not accustomed to putting it that way. (Even young girls, when puberty comes, are forced by the menstrual cycle to think ahead: will I be under the weather when I have to perform in a dance or play or athletic contest, when I have a special date--or, later, a sexual liaison or a set marriage date? Boys have no equivalent physiological reason to think ahead, and their whole peer culture militates against their doing so.)

was that this spouse would be a woman (although there was one woman in the large pool of presidential candidates). Her predecessor could speak for her better than the candidate's wife could speak for herself. The memorandum goes into many household details, and discusses the people to whom the wife can turn with confidence that she is not being over-demanding. It also emphasizes for the benefit of the trustees that the latter must consider how to regularize the channels by which the spouse's requests for help can be funneled to the institution without appearing as additional and irritating burdens which make more difficult her husband's own tasks.[7]

This is the kind of situation in which one wishes for the Japanese institution of the go-between. We tend to use lawyers for such purposes, but much of the training of the lawyer has been adversarial, rather than learning to think in terms of tradeoffs and bringing people together. Given the rapidly changing attitudes and roles of women, and correspondingly of men, and the various tree-ring layers to be found on many boards of trustees with regard to such changes, there will likely be difficult periods of

7. Practices and circumstances differ concerning the extent of help a departing presidential couple may provide for their successors. Jean Kemeny has written that she went over the President's House with her successor, speaking into a tape recorder so that what she said about each relevant item could be recalled. But there are many situations, especially where there has been a hiatus and an interim or acting president, where the departing incumbents and their successors do not meet--although there are few situations as awkward as the one where the former president remains on campus as a professor or in the local community as an active agent, sometimes going to the lengths of Harold Taylor when he was no longer President of Sarah Lawrence College in telling students how marvelous it had been under his own regime and thus undercutting the less flamboyant incumbent. In one case, where the incoming president's wife asked her predecessor about members of the administration and faculty vis-a-vis whom she should be wary and vis-a-vis whom she could expect help, she was told precisely nothing. When she met her predecessor later, and talked about her difficulties with so-and-so, her predecessor said that she had anticipated such difficulties but did not want to prejudice the judgments of the newcomer. Actually, she could have given warnings which would have been salubrious!

transition in which the wife especially may be involved.

Moreover, these same changes, especially those in the attitudes of women toward themselves and each other, may influence the decision of the candidate's wife as to whether or not she wishes to move and the spirit in which she comes to a decision. In an earlier day, she would have asked herself whether she had the capacity to be a useful presidential spouse in the new setting--an added dimension for the institution. Would she have enough stamina to endure the attacks and pressures that her husband is likely to face, as well as to help him endure the inexorable pressures of the position? Neither partner can anticipate all the eventualities which may change a relatively tranquil situation into a troubled one, but anyone with experience of life has already encountered Murphy's Law: if something can go wrong, it will. There will be seasons of almost unbearable overload.

But the women's movements have had an impact far beyond their visible and activist adherents. Vis-a-vis some of the movements' imperatives, a wife may feel a bit guilty if she does not ask herself how a move will contribute to her own development. She is aware that she may be regarded by some of the younger women faculty members and by working faculty wives as "just the president's wife," with the same derogatory inflection with which all too often the expression, "just a housewife," is used by women about themselves (as if bringing up children and making a home were trivial, mindless tasks). A number of wives report their annoyance with the frequently asked question: "What do you <u>do</u>, Mrs. ---?"

The wife who moves from a metropolitan setting to a small community may have an especially difficult time. In the former environment she could be relatively anonymous and, if she wished, could pursue further education at a

number of institutions as well as profit from the cultural opportunities of the locale in line with her personal interests. However, in a smaller, more restricted setting, the presidential partners occupy center stage and the wife's opportunities to pursue her own interests are limited, while the institutional demands, not only that she involve herself with faculty, staff, and students, but also with local luminaries, are traditional and incessant.

III

Social and Psychic Support

In an earlier era, the presidents of many of the academic institutions we now inhabit appear, at least in retrospect, to have been arrogant, self-confident men. William Rainey Harper of Chicago, Daniel Coit Gilman of Hopkins, Andrew Dixon White of Cornell, Charles W. Eliot and later A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard, and into a more recent era, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, had a capacity to be imperious that today would jibe neither with the growth of faculty power vis-a-vis administration nor the expectation that those we allow, with great ambivalence, to be our leaders should be consultative, conciliatory, and in manner egalitarian.[8]

I recall in this connection the attitude that my colleagues at the University of Chicago took when they went about suggesting a successor to Robert Maynard Hutchins, who had indeed possessed, along with a wit that could be biting, the omnicompetent arrogance that is sometimes the result of

8. One influence that psychodynamic thought has had on many people is to lead them to suppose that a person who appears arrogant is basically insecure. In my observation, this is often but by no means invariable the case. There are arrogant people, immune to self-doubt, and more often found among the ranks of eminent faculty at leading institutions than among administrators.

early success in the law. (In other fields of endeavor, such as government and diplomacy, most people soon learn that they must hide their arrogance if they are to get ahead.) Hutchins employed some of the same cavalier methods as President Franklin D. Roosevelt: the latter, when he could not master one of the old-line Cabinet departments, created an autonomous agency to compete with it, much as Hutchins would create an interdisciplinary committee. Hutchins sometimes overreached himself, as when he abolished electives in the undergraduate College he had reorganized, thus closing off any opportunity for the Graduate Divisions to recruit undergraduates, and hence increasing what was already a considerable hostility vis-a-vis the College. Brighter, wittier, quicker than many of his scholarly faculty, Hutchins did not hide his contempt for them.[9]

When Robert Hutchins left, many made what seemed to me as a faculty member at that time a mistaken judgment: namely, that it was time to recruit a consolidator, a conciliatory and amiable successor. It did not seem to me that the University of Chicago, which had uneven local support and had antagonized many alumni/ae and others, could afford a locum tenens; it needed to maintain its momentum and dynamism as a world-class university, drawing support from all over, if it were to survive. It needed, especially in the era of Joseph McCarthy and the local Illinois committee investigating

9. Here is one of the rare cases where the spouse may have contributed a little bit to the rising tide of feeling against her husband. Maude Hutchins was a painter and a fine writer. She took no part in the usual duties of the President's wife, such as entertaining or otherwise drawing either faculty or trustees into the President's orbit. Indeed, I recall one year she scandalized many of the faculty by sending out as a Christmas card from President and Mrs. Hutchins a drawing of a nude, her daughter used as her model. While this episode alone did not at that time and place make for any particular difficulty, it was certainly eccentric, like much else she did. She struck out on her own--in what seemed extreme ways, that were her natural mode; she was making clear that she would not inhibit herself on account of her position.

subversion, a fiercely independent leader such as Hutchins. Indeed, in the job description I wrote for a successor to Hutchins, I said we should look for a tall, aristocratic Englishman whom no one would think of calling by his first name, and to whom no one would think of saying something like: "Joe, wouldn't it be a good idea if you didn't give a raise to Professor So-and-So, because his fellow-traveler opinions have created such headaches for us in the legislature and in fund-raising?" Nevertheless, a conciliatory man, Chancellor Lawrence Kimpton, was chosen. Kimpton reassured the graduate faculty that, unlike Hutchins, he appreciated the value of research and of departmental specialists; he also sought to resolve the strains of a virtual two-class faculty, one oriented toward research and graduate training, the other toward undergraduate teaching in the General Education programs of the College. Extramurally, he sought to make peace with the Chicago Tribune, and to tell high school principals that the College was a place for their all-around athletes and not merely for their weird intellectuals. This advice many resented, for if they had such all-around students, the latter would choose Northwestern over Chicago, and Stanford or the Ivy League over both. In the principals' view, Chicago should remain an institution to which they could send their troublesome but talented intellectuals.[10]

10. I should in fairness to the legal profession add that later Chicago chose one of its own, Law Dean Edward H. Levi, who carried the University through the period of student-faculty protests in the late 1960's without making concessions to the protestors. Thus, he was able to retain support of a majority of his faculty. Levi, for example, was able to hold onto his faculty while he refused to negotiate with students who had seized the administration building. He dismissed a number of the protestors when they recognized that they could not budge the Administration and finally evacuated. However, considerable polarization did occur, between faculty supporters of the protests, which originated because of the refusal of the Department of Sociology to reappoint Marlene Dixon, a radical feminist, and faculty who

In recent years, a number of the lawyers who have become presidents of major universities have actually come out of work in labor arbitration; they have, so to speak, been conciliators in their professional specialization. Indeed, the search procedures we have discussed earlier are not only likely to highlight law professors specializing in labor law and in arbitration, but to prefer them over candidates who come up the regular ladder of academic departments whom faculty members in general prefer and whom advertisements for candidates specifically solicit. Whether arbitrators or not, moreover, the search procedures are unlikely to let pass an arrogant candidate. However, there are situations where a president who might be regarded as arbitrary can be chosen, notably when a new institution is started and there is not yet on hand a faculty or student body to have a voice in selection. For example, Gerald Grant and I (1978, Chap. 9) have described the reaction of many faculty to Richard Bjork, the founding President of Stockton State College. When he was chosen, Bjork was already Associate Chancellor of the New Jersey Board of Higher Education (then headed by Ralph Dungan, who had become the President of Glassboro State College when that institution was looking for a permanent incumbent). When nominated as President of the new South Jersey College, Bjork had to satisfy the South Jersey businessmen and women, editors and activists, who had been agitating for a college or preferably a university in South Jersey and who approved the choice of Richard Bjork. There were neither faculty nor students around to object to the choice. In Bjork's initial years, there was a high turn-

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supported the position of the administration either out of loyalty to the integrity of the University or, primarily, out of political and cultural conservatism.

over of top-level administrators. Many faculty regarded him as high-handed. They were among the first in the New Jersey State College System to find in unionization an outlet for their uneasiness and hostility. It is necessary to add that none of this reflects on the actual quality of Richard Bjork's handling of the Presidency. It did not endear him to many faculty, although it was useful in the development of Stockton State College, that he kept the level of tenured faculty low, making possible rapid adaptation to changes in the vocational and other interests of students. In fact, Bjork saw himself as primarily serving the students and judged faculty in terms of how effectively they responded to students.

The formation of a faculty union was also a consequence of the antagonism of a large number of arts and sciences faculty members to the argumentative and, in their view, arbitrary presidency of John Silber of Boston University. The latter had come as something of a hero because, at the University of Texas, where he had been Dean of a unified College of Arts and Sciences, he had fought the Regents when the latter wanted to break up the College and divide the Arts and Sciences (in part to curb Silber's power, which they themselves feared). But the hero in Austin was soon the villain for some faculty in Boston. These faculty members, primarily in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and not in the professional schools, resented the argumentativeness of Silber, an incisive and decisive philosopher. In fact Silber expected his faculty to argue with him, as in some kind of Greek symposium, perhaps not fully making allowances for the formidable forensic talents he himself possessed nor the significance of the fact that, as President, faculty believed that he could both hurt and help them more than he was either likely or prepared to do. Some of his bitterest faculty

critics charged that Silber was violating their academic freedom even as they dramaturgically were exercising it. The faculty then proceeded to unionize, a move fought by Silber and the trustees at first on the basis of questions concerning the scope of the bargaining unit, and then, by reference to the Yeshiva decision; the case is still pending. The faculty union has conducted two strikes, seeking in vain to close down the campus and gaining national publicity through the media. Disputes have arisen which appear to an outsider increasingly petty, such as whether faculty members should be paid if they did not meet their classes during a brief strike. Some administrators, caught between the dynamo President and the embattled members of the faculty, either were dismissed or left; however, there remains a cohort of Silber loyalists, some of them on the campus and others departing on friendly terms for preferred positions elsewhere. The antagonism to Silber rose in the face of his remarkable accomplishments: he put on the country's intellectual map an institution that had previously been recognized only along the Eastern Seaboard; he greatly increased enrollment (vital for the survival of a university almost entirely dependent on tuition); he recruited eminent University Professors (some of whom had the specific assignment of concentrating on undergraduate teaching); he further developed the already eminent professional schools; in addition, he appeared in the country at large as a major spokesman for private higher education.[11]

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11. See the interview with John Silber in Educational Record, "John Silber: After '60 Minutes,'" vol. 61, no. 2, Spring, 1980.

Another rescuing president who came into a private college which, like many others, was suffering from a declining applicant pool and limited endowment, is Leon Botstein of Bard College. Botstein had first come to notice as the youngest college president in the country when he took over a failing Franconia College and brought it temporarily into equilibrium. He is himself a graduate of the College of the

But it would seem a general rule to which there are only a few exceptions, that a president who loses faculty support is unlikely to last. This is so even in the period of stagnation or retrenchment that most non-Sun Belt institutions have entered. Faculty power has been reduced by a lack of the mobility that was characteristic of the previous several decades and the fading of what Jencks and I termed the "academic revolution" that put the faculty in the saddle vis-a-vis other contenders for control of major colleges and universities (Jencks and Riesman, 1968). John Silber has suffered defections from the board of trustees, but other members and Silber himself have succeeded in building a board that believes in him and will support him.

There may be a number of small, church-related institutions or some community colleges where the president can act in a manner regarded as arbitrary and arrogant and retain the position. This is true, I might add, for both sexes;[12] however, in general, if all faculty support is lost, neither state regents nor the trustees of private institutions are likely to be able to maintain a president in office, nor would most presidents today, who are

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University of Chicago and has imbibed a number of the Hutchins ideals; he is impatient, demanding, and quick. He too is someone who is not patient with those he regards as fools. Like Silber, he retains the support of his trustees, and also, as indicated, of many faculty.

12. One subspecies of presidential women who may sometimes be regarded by some of their faculty as arrogant are the members of a religious community. Experience in such a community, with its closeness and the subtlety of its personal relations, can be excellent training for a college president. And members of the Order, although virtually everywhere now a small minority of administrators and faculty (as so many have "kicked the habit" and so few have taken up vocations) can provide a phalanx of support for a president chosen from the Order. (There is, however, the ambiguous position of the president whose academic subordinate may be her superior in the Order--one of the many intricacies of life in community with which regular sisters and priests must learn to cope.)

not invulnerable, want to stay in office.

The wife of the arrogant president who, unlike Maude Hutchins, does not care to strike out on her own, is in an unhappy position. She is of course aware of the enmity that surrounds her husband; she may construe it as unfair, but that does not help. She may also recognize that her husband is not as invulnerable as he appears, but at least he has the opportunity for taking action, of a verbal sort, at any rate, against his opponents, while she must stay in the shadow, suffering in silence. She cannot make efforts to be conciliatory vis-a-vis her husband's opponents without appearing to betray him.

We have begun with the rare exceptional case because it often sheds light on the more typical one. That is the situation where the presidential spouse notices the signals indicating that the partner is in particular need of understanding and support; the spouse must, at an appropriate time, draw on experience and wisdom in knowing how and when to offer advice.

In those not infrequent cases where, after the compulsory outside search, a president is promoted from the ranks of faculty or even from a deanship, many of the issues faced by the spouse concern the change in position in the couple's relation with former faculty friends and junior administrators. The new position will look more powerful and luxurious than it really is. Such a situation is reminiscent of the marvelous episode Muriel Beadle recounts in Where Has All the Ivy Gone? She describes a maniacally hectic day when, rushing home from one appointment to get ready for the next, she found a card from a group of ladies who wanted her to attend a luncheon. Inscribed on the envelope was a note that it was to be delivered on Mrs. Beadle's breakfast tray. The incident first led her to weep and then break down in hysterical laughter.

Presidential couples may find it hard to retain faculty friends as intimates. I know a presidential couple who live in a medium-sized city where they have a bachelor friend on the faculty whom they meet secretly off-campus in a restaurant so tacky that even students have not been known to go there. How will new friends be found? Among administrators elsewhere and perhaps among those on their own campus? How will they cope with the initial isolation and the estrangement from old friends--for they may be truly lonely in new crowds as well as in old ones?

In what would seem to be the majority of settings, the president is a male and it is his wife who must assume as part of her role the task of social entertaining. Here the wife may adopt a style that will make the couple appear to their old friends as behaving in a more formal, or so to speak "gracious," manner; they are more visible, they are in effect the institution's living logo, and they cannot afford to be as relaxed and casual as they might prefer. Privacy is lost, not only because the old-fashioned grapevine carries more messages, but also because the media too may carry messages.

Jean Alexander Kemeny remained decidedly herself in maintaining her previous informal style of entertaining. She did not invariably suppress her anger or other emotions. Although privacy was lost and relations with faculty friends at Dartmouth became temporarily less intimate, Jean Kemeny refused to carry a new increment of inhibitions, and was not hesitant to startle faculty by showing up at a regular faculty meeting. Marguerite Walker Corbally's book is sprinkled with very American messages to spouses to "be yourself"; but most of us, if we are not insensitive or posing as

eccentrics, exhibit different sides of ourselves in different company. In a way, these intricacies, at once practical and emotional, involved in entertaining in an almost inevitable official capacity, may carry less anguish if one can start in a new locale.

Whether they move to a new college or university, or stay in the same place, the president's wife will have to be a most resourceful and reliable confidante. Presidents of colleges and universities, like presidents of the United States, need "kitchen cabinets," and usually confidantes are found more readily in their own kitchens than in a more lavishly appointed setting. Indeed, presidents' wives commonly find themselves in the kitchen! (To a degree that may seem surprising, male presidents are also often in the kitchen, sometimes helping get breakfast and cleaning up the dishes after a rare family meal. Partly, this reflects the difficulties of securing capable help even if the institution would pay for it; but there is also a greater willingness, especially of younger husbands, to share in household tasks--and in the case of several presidents, a desire not to allow oneself to live on a scale of household support that would make it emotionally difficult to return to regular faculty status. Moreover, many partners, unlike even moderately well-off Americans in an earlier epoch, prefer the periodic burdens of privacy to what now seem to many the hazards and intrusion of live-in help.)

In those settings where a woman is acting as full-time presidential spouse, while trying to make room in the lives of both partners for their growing children, and for time to be together, the strains on the marriage bond are great, strains in effect increased by recognition of the fact that as one looks about the country, there are very few circles where divorce

still carries any opprobrium. Among the many married presidents I have known of both sexes, divorce is exceedingly rare, far less than one would expect among educated professional people today. However, Joseph Kauffman states in his new book, At the Pleasure of the Board (Kauffman, 1980), that in his small sample divorces are becoming far more common, though probably not as frequent as in the general population. However, Nadine Skotheim has observed five divorces in universitites in the Northwest in the course of seven years (personal communication, 1982). In the more fortunate cases, the strains can contribute to creating a strong and deep relationship. The spouse may often conclude that she is her husband's psychotherapist, giving him comfort and understanding, fresh perspectives, and, when appropriate, sharp criticisms. In many cases, the partners learn to communicate with each other with full candor--especially since there are unlikely to be others with whom this is possible.

What, as already implied, is sometimes difficult is to find the privacy for such exchanges. Occasions such as professional meetings may provide opportunities for a somewhat truncated privacy since one is not on public call and public display at one's home campus.

IV

Outreach and/or Public Relations

There is a kind of male camaraderie that grows up among boys around sports and talk about sports, sometimes about sexual exploits, often about cars, boats, private planes or motorbikes, etc. This sort of easy gregariousness, reminiscent of what some anthropologists discuss under the heading of "male bonding," is sometimes not outgrown. In his study of executive

leadership in high-technology corporations, Michael Maccoby (The Gamesman Simon & Shuster, 1978), sees many successful managers as gamesmen: team players, fair-minded, enjoying the sport of beating out an adversary. In an earlier era, Maccoby argued, there were more men whom he termed jungle fighters, lone operators who would be extruded from the modern corporation as untrustworthy and uncooperative. (In an essay-review of The Gamesman for Change magazine, I noted that I had encountered more jungle fighters in academic life than in large corporate enterprise.) Maccoby also took account of those he termed the craftsmen, isolated like the jungle fighter, but focused on the work itself, essential for industry--as for scholarship--but unlikely candidates for top positions. The fourth type in Maccoby's account was the company man, concerned less with the game of winning and more with the long-run future of the company; in academic life, I would prefer to speak of institutional loyalists. But Maccoby regarded most executives as gamesmen, in a sense as boys with somewhat arrested development in terms of inwardness, although in mid-career a number of them may become conscious of this lack, tire of playing the game, and may look for something more challenging.

Traditionally, the wives of mobile professional men have played a large role in maintaining kin connections, but have often surrendered earlier friendships, substituting for these their husbands' friends and those made jointly by the couple. Even so, our society often depends on the glue, such as there is, that women provide through keeping up not only kin connections but friendships. Many college-educated women maintain lifelong friendships with other women, and in these instances they do so even after marriage, when they move also in the circles of their spouses. The women's liberation

movements have, as one of their contributions, institutionalized what might be termed female-bonding, in the consciousness-raising or discussion groups of women about their situation as women. These groups provide mutual support, but also run the risk of censorious attitudes toward women who are not sufficiently liberated or are spending their time bringing up children. (On this score, the women's movements have become less strident and univocal.)

All this is prologue to saying that one of the great services a president's wife may provide is finding friends through her own community activities so that through the wives of other executives, such as business and banking people, doctors, lawyers, ministers, museum curators, or whatever the locality offers, ties may be cultivated for those rare occasions where there is not an obligatory meeting of some committee or other codetermining body. A president and his wife need <u>real</u> friends on whom they can count in the place where they are now. Part of the quiet contribution of the spouse may be to cement such friendships when the president may be too exhausted and too much on the road to keep them alive.

There is some danger for the spouse in fulfilling these multiple roles in that she may come to see herself <u>only</u> as an extension of her husband. She may have to struggle to keep her autonomous psychological position for her own survival. If for some spouses the sacrifice they make is too great, there is the risk that they will overestimate their husbands' importance in order to justify to themselves the suppression of their own concerns, and even anxieties, which they hesitate to add to those they know their husbands carry constantly. Such a wife could build up unconscious resentments against her husband and against the demands that the institution makes on both of them.

A presidential wife who has her own career may be able, however, to serve this function of support and companionship, and still find, even at the cost of some additional strains on them both, the opportunity to renew their own relationship of candor and criticism. And often through her career she can find new friendships for both of them. The wife who does not have a full-time career exterior to the institution can, however, play a more visible role.

Paradoxically, the wife who does not have an independent career may in fact in terms of the institution be gainfully employed, although not personally remunerated, as in effect the institution's second most visible public relations officer. Needless to say, there are enormous variations in expected behavior depending on the kind of institution: from a commuter, urban institution which is part of a state system and dependent primarily on FTE funding, to a residential college or university which is the most important "industry" in its locale.

Yet, although the partners may come to regard themselves as performing these services at the pleasure of the professional public relations personnel, relations with the latter can be difficult. Especially here must the wife tread warily. Not all professional public relations officials are likely to appreciate it if the president's spouse has ideas of her own about what sorts of public affairs she would like to take part in--which either have not been traditionally performed by the spouse or which are not high on the priorities of the development office. Yet actions the wife might take on her own can nonetheless be very helpful to the college. The president's wife as a woman can speak to and for women of various cultural and political persuasions. Her inventiveness will lie in discovering community groups,

perhaps even in helping to create some, with whom she can talk about the institution's relation to the locality.

The combination of energy and tact which so many spouses exhibit leads them to involvement in many activities within the institution in which they may be expected to offer their judgment as well as their homes and their services. But the spouse must be wary even here lest she be drawn into arenas which appear plausible on their face but are actually enmeshed in controversy. Like a Peace Corps Volunteer in an African village who innocently accepts an invitation to the home of someone who turns out to be the leader of a rebellious faction, the wife may be invited to sponsor a women's forum which has been staged or taken over by the more extreme wings of the many women's movements. This may appeal to some of the more active feminist students and to some younger women faculty and administrators, but it may offend the majority of women and certainly not endear the spouse to many of the men.

V

Dilemmas of the Volunteer

When Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States in 1831, he was naturally impressed with the mobility of the population, with the farmers who moved ever westward and who were as much land speculators as cultivators. He was also impressed with what seemed to a European an extraordinary independence of American young women, and women in general. They were not chaperoned; they were free to go and come on their own. They were essential partners to their husbands on the farm and in small business. The wives of leading figures were already then visible. Thus, there is an historical

tradition in what Hanna Papanek has termed the "two-person career" of married partners, a tradition that goes back to the days when college and university presidents were pastors whose wives understood their roles much as many presidents' spouses do today.

There is also the more general American tradition of the activist wife whom Tocqueville observed taking part in such volunteer movements as the fights against Demon Rum or for prison reform as well as in other crusades by women (which preceded, although not by many years, the first stirrings of the women's movements) in which women were crusading not on behalf of others but principally or even exclusively on their own behalf.

However, volunteer activity is looked down on by those segments of the women's movements where there is insistence that only paid work of a full-time sort is worthwhile.[13] Given the animus vis-a-vis the volunteer, and the quite justified feeling of many presidential spouses that they are exploited by institutional demands, a number have wondered whether or not it would be practicable and desirable if they were paid a salary. Such a question is also being discussed in the Foreign Service, where the wife of a top Foreign Service officer must often perform many of the duties of outreach which are comparable to the tasks of the traditional presidential spouse, although the danger of death at the hands of terrorists is indeed greater in certain hazardous posts in the Foreign Service than it ever was on even the

13. Work as such, a mere paying job, is not esteemed either. There are millions of working-class wives or women who are single parents who work because they have to. Such women were "liberated" from the home as early as the Lowell and other mills were established in this country, and down to the end of the last century when women took the place of men as stenographers and in many similar white-collar positions. The educated "movement" women are in search of careers, not a sequence of jobs. And they tend to look down on careers which have been those traditionally occupied by women, often poorly paid, such as in the helping professions of teaching and nursing.

most agitated campuses in the late 1960's and early 1970's. But some presidential wives with whom I have discussed the issue of pay are at best ambivalent toward the idea. I think of one president's wife who prepared herself to give a talk to a club in a medium-sized town by reading some of the literature already mentioned, such as The Partners, and she wrote: "There is another byproduct of this reading and thinking. A feeling of incredible inadequacy! There are long lists of qualifications and skills which are supposed to be needed to be a successful college president's wife. I possess only two of them: a liking for people and a high energy level. On all other categories I fail." To pay a woman so diffident about her own contribution might only make her more anxious. Quite secure presidential wives also have expressed reluctance to surrender the modicum of flexibility their lives as volunteers allow them through the constraint of having to justify in a visible way what they are being paid.[14]

There is a further difficulty in that so much of what a wife contributes is impalpable to outsiders and sometimes difficult even for the wife herself to assess. Since residual nepotism rules have now generally been abolished, let us suppose that a particular spouse negotiates a salary or one is negotiated on her behalf on the basis of an estimate by the trustees responsive to her more visible contributions. What then will be the situation of a sucessor spouse? Will she (or perhaps a male spouse) come in at

14. Kay Bergathon (Mrs. Ronald Bergathon, wife of the former President of Lafayette College and currently interim President of New England College) has commented that contemporary nepotism rules, while permitting spouses to be on the payroll of the same educational unit, prohibits situations where one is the superior and the other the subordinate, although it is not clear to me that this is an appropriate way to describe the dual employment of the partners. Mrs. Bergathon also mentioned several candidates for a recent presidential vacancy who are husband-and-wife teams, seeking joint occupancy of the position; the search committee declined to pursue these candidacies.

the same level of salary, allowing for increments for inflation? But suppose it is generally felt that the new spouse contributes less than the old? Can the stipend be cut without offending both partners and without humiliating both? Or, in the converse case, can a salary be raised without invidious reflection on the predecessor spouse? The situation is different, although perhaps still somewhat complicated, if the spouse holds a regular line position on campus for which expectations are set and hence where adequacy of performance, never easy to assess, can nevertheless be roughly measured. In the face of the difficulties I have suggested, it seems unlikely that in the future it will become customary for spouses to be paid salaries for their joint positions with their husbands.

Furthermore, I would not want to surrender to what I regard as the ill-considered attack on the volunteer. It is what Thorstein Veblen might have called a one-eyed view to conclude that only having a paid career with one's name on the door is a legitimate life course for either sex.

VI

Involvement with Students, Faculty, and Staff

Among the spouse's clearly complex and manifold tasks is her job as a listening post. She may generally have more time than her husband to read the student paper, including letters and editorials and those news stories which are, in this age of advocacy journalism, disguised editorials. If the student papers of private liberal arts colleges and universities and from public comprehensive colleges and the great research universities such as Texas, Illinois, and Michigan are any illustration, she is apt to find tendentious misinterpretation of what are alternatively termed the malign,

penny-pinching, and unfeeling goals of the president or "the administration," and she may be astonished at the self-indulgence by which student committees blithely disregard financial as well as political or cultural constraints under which the institution operates.[15]

There frequently is a vocal minority of faculty and students who want the college or university to behave as an ideal or idealistic institution. There must be no complicitous investments. At times students will back striking workers against the institution, although thre is now a greater wariness about backing striking faculty who prevent hard-up students, desperate for the credential, from going to classes, or perhaps from taking examinations.

Wives cannot avoid being caught up, if not directly then certainly at a slight distance and emotionally, in all such happenings. They must learn to cope and to keep their cool. For example, in arranging occasions at which both students and faculty are invited to the presidential house (depending very much on the size and the locale of the campus), some spouses have found that even students who can viciously attack "the administration" enjoy being inside a home where there is a family with children. I have especially in

15. In a study now in progress of the relations between presidents and boards of trustees of small liberal arts colleges, Mrs. Miriam Wood has discovered that one of the main sources trustees use to inform themselves concerning presidential performance is the student paper; the trustees say they discount what the paper reports, but often cumulative complaints help produce uneasiness among the trustees. In one medium-sized Midwestern state university, the trustees have asked that copies of the student daily be mailed to them by the administration immediately on the day of its appearance, rather than waiting to receive it in the normal course of delivery. Of course, stories in the local or national media are taken with the greatest seriousness even when they too are clearly products of advocacy journalism, and presidents may compromise many grievances where they would stand a good chance of winning before an appropriate tribunal, in order to avoid adverse publicity. (Wood, 1982)

mind here students who are away from their own parental homes and not the older students who have already found homes or "meaningful relations" of their own. By inviting faculty members to bring their own children, an atmosphere can be created for which many students and faculty are grateful, provided that there is some way of making arrangements for small children which will spare the faculty couple from having to engage a babysitter.

Through the spouse's sense of humor, her feeling that loyalty to the institution runs only one way and is not reciprocated can be attenuated. One presidential spouse recently told me of a time when the couple returned from a meeting at eleven in the evening, completely exhausted, to find a delegation of students sitting on the porch of the president's house. Their only desire was to invite the students to "please clear out," but knowing they could not do this, they invited them in for cookies and soft drinks. In spite of late hour hospitality, the leader of the delegation proceeded to denounce the president in the most savage way. A few days later the same student came in to ask for a Rhodes Scholarship recommendation. The spouse could help the president see the humor in this, and they could laugh about it together as one of life's many ironies. However, it is surely the case that most presidential partners are today more vulnerable to vituperative attacks from students, as also to criticisms from their own children, than would have been the case in an earlier day. (I can recall that my own criticisms, as a student more than half a century ago, of what I considered the unimaginative architecture of the Harvard Houses had not the slightest effect on President A. Lawrence Lowell. I have known a number of contemporary presidents who were wounded, even if not frightened, when students screamed at them that they are racist or when they were attacked in the

student or the local press in the name of righteousness.)

Idealistic students and faculty may also want the president and the president's spouse to act as ideal citizens in their definition of what that means. The husband is criticized if he belongs to a club that excludes women, whether it is the Bohemian Club (for non-Bohemians only!) in Northern California or the Century Association in Manhattan. Of course, the partners must not belong to any social or country club which may be regarded as discriminating on racial or ethnic grounds, no matter how useful such a club may be as a locale for generating important support and also as a restorative retreat for the presidential couple. If a cross is burned on campus, as happened in the fall of 1980 at Williams College, there is no question as to how the spouse should respond to the outrage if, in the absence of her husband, she must speak for the two of them and for the institution. But there will be borderline cases of pranks and jokes which some on campus may regard as sexist or racist where reactions will not be so automatic, and where the spouse will have to bear in mind groups outside the community who would regard the event as not exactly a federal case--although it seems that there is little now that happens on campus that cannot be and is not turned into a federal case. When President James J. Whalen of Ithaca College expelled three undergraduates for parading across campus in KKK robes, the local press attacked him fiercely for treating a stunt with such seemingly excessive penalties, although that attitude changed with the next "stunt" involved swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti.

There are instances in the presidency of the United States where having a wife express a different opinion from that of her husband can be an advantage, showing that a point of view which is widely represented in the country,

but in terms of political clout perhaps a minority gets a respectful hearing in the White House. Eleanor Roosevelt fulfilled this function superbly for Franklin Roosevelt; Lady Bird Johnson sought to do it for Lyndon Johnson, in part because she took as her domain such areas as environment and beautification. Rosalynn Carter often expressed the more graceful and caring concerns she shared with her husband and, at times, disagreed with him at least in emphasis on several issues. The leeway which the wife of a college or university president has to express opinions different from those of her spouse seems to me more limited, however. If her husband has concluded it was necessary to call out the local police to quell a student demonstration or riot, it would be permissible for her to express sympathy for injured students, but not for their cause. In general, as poll data in the last two decades indicate, women have a greater concern for peace and greater anxiety about the dangers of nuclear weapons than men do. However, when Mary Elmendorf, the wife of the late President of New College in Sarasota (now New College of the University of South Florida) actively campaigned in 1968 for Eugene McCarthy, this endeared neither her nor the College to the conservative residents of the Sarasota area.[16]

Throughout history, women have been peacemakers, even though when roused to violence, some can be more violent than most men. In the conflicts of our time that agitate both the campus and its environs, the spouse can contribute toward making peace and finding bases of common interest and at least temporary harmony among groups, even groups of violent women.

The spouse's ability to invent such compromises and to move toward cooperation is assisted by the many occasions where she has a chance to

16. For fuller discussion, see Grant and Riesman, The Perpetual Dream, 1978 chapter 7.

listen and observe. She may have easier access to faculty wives, especially if the faculty wives are encountered in settings which are extracurricular, for example, a painting class or athletics or community activities such as the school board in which there is parental involvement.

I have already indicated the capacity of the spouse to serve as a listening post. All experienced spouses know they are told things which it is hoped will be passed on to the president, some of which they will keep to themselves as redundant or already known or adding to a moment of particular hazard. I might add in this connection that a spouse will often hear praise of her husband which people would be embarrassed to say directly to him, sometimes because they assume he knows he is good, or they fear to seem to be currying favor and believe they can speak in a less contaminated way to the spouse. But if she overadmires her husband, she will not pick up those criticisms or fumbles that are relevant for him to hear, where criticism is justified or may be helpful, no matter how unwelcome.

A college town of even modest size is likely to have a little theater, and if not a full orchestra at least a few chamber music and choral groups. There may even be a bookstore which sells not only T-shirts, textbooks, and pornographic bestsellers, but also translations of work by Francophone West African writers, modern Japanese novelists and social critics, Mexican and Latin American poets; and in addition an FM radio station and perhaps the college's own broadcasting facilities, an area in which many community colleges as well as four-year institutions have pioneered. My guess would be that many of these community resources were created in large part through the efforts of women, sometimes of previous presidential spouses. The incumbent spouse may if she chooses continue and expand these efforts.

Through all such activities, the president's spouse may have an opportunity to get to know the spouses of some local trustees and in that way gain a keener sense than the president may have of how the trustees react or how attentive they are to campus affairs. She knows, even if there is no formal procedure, that her husband is being constantly evaluated. She as well as her husband may be anxious when there are informal contacts between members of the board and faculty or administrators who are capable of transmitting information unfavorable to the president. She and her husband must live with a combination of institutional loyalty and metaphorical bags packed.

A number of presidential wives may feel they are required to know more about the institution, in order to interpret their husbands' tasks and opportunities, then they really care to know. One could say that many presidential wives serve the institution through a cluster or amalgam of interests and actions, each one of which may appear small, so that the constellation tends to be under-recognized by any single constituency and to be felt by many wives as amorphous, problematic, and, in contrast to her privacy-denying visibility, intentionally conducted with a low profile so as to avoid even the appearance of imperiousness or a search for equal billing with her partner.

VII

Relations with Women Faculty and Faculty Wives

One of the most difficult problems for the president's wife in a very personal sense, as well as politically, is likely to be her relations with

women faculty members and faculty wives who are pursuing full-time careers. It is hard to overestimate the amount of mutual antagonism that exists between full-time career women and those who pursue a different sort of career, supportive of their husbands, of an institution, and of a locality, but who cannot be found on the organization chart.[17] Indeed, some of the most important people in a university are not on most organization charts: namely, the president's spouse and usually the secretaries of major administrators, most of them women.

On any large faculty today, there will be older women who are career women on their own without the help of the women's movements and Affirmative Action, and who are resentful of younger women faculty members who are courting their women students with "women's studies" programs and courses and are making some senior facultywomen look old-fashioned and square. The activists among the feminists exacerbate the antagonism already mentioned.

The president and his wife are likely to be at the stage of life where the children are grown if not flown--a stage at which the wife can think of taking up again some work of interest she has had and managed perhaps to keep warm on the back of the stove. She is likely to be happier if she can find the time to return to her part-time teaching or painting or entrepreneurship, indeed any work which neither demands full time commitment

17. The power of the antagonism between a full-time career woman and the more or less full-time homemaker-volunteer probably reflects the fact that each misses something in the life of the other. The career woman may feel guilty about some neglect of her own children, parking them in day care centers of doubtful provenance when young, and unable to be with them continuously when they are ill or on vacation from school. Or she has decided not to have children and yet has a certain longing for motherhood. On the other hand, many homemakers who have had excellent educations or possess unusual talents may conclude that they could have done more with their lives, and envy the at least seeming freedom of the liberated career woman.

nor of the sort that can be performed only at a few metropolitan locales. Moreover, this may also help put her more at ease with some of the female constituencies surrounding her.

VIII

Changing Expectations and Short Tenures

When there is a change of presidency, unavowed expectations as to a successor couple are often built up which would be difficult to meet. In other cases, there are hopes that the incoming spouse will behave differently from her predecessor. I have in mind a private liberal arts college located in a small community. The spouse of the previous incumbent had made evident her disdain for the "local yokels." She was pursuing a doctorate in counseling psychology at a neighboring university, and there were some on the campus who thought that her counseling techniques might have been put to use nearer home base. However, precisely because of the relative isolation of the institution, the previous practice had been to depend on the presidential couple to entertain both town and gown. The presidential house was large and handsome enough, and provided by custom with sufficient institutional support, to make such entertaining seem feasible as well as desirable. When a successor was chosen, one of his qualifications, in the eyes of many, was that he should have a wife who was clearly outgoing and gregarious, someone who combined intellectual interests with the diplomatic talents of a Washington hostess.

If one has a chance to talk frankly with presidential partners about expectations for the future, there seems to be a general sense that a decade's tenure is a likely limit. (Sometimes, in fact, this amounts to two

five-year terms, interrupted by some kind of assessment--inevitably anxiety-provoking, no matter how secure the president may feel he or she is in reality.) But beyond the uncertainty of the president's career, a female spouse is aware of the actuarial fact that women live longer than men, and are often slightly younger than their husbands to begin with. What happens to me, the wife will ask herself, if I should become a widow? How will I be able to translate my uncredentialed skills, my skills which are most useful when least visible, into a curriculum vitae when I may have to or want to seek a paid position?

I think the task of transition to a position other than president's wife is going to be easier now than it was in the past, since so many women have found that they can, sometimes with further education and sometimes without, return to the labor market and make use of their managerial skills, their "people" skills, their knowledge of how organizations function. However, many wives wonder, usually in silence, how they will support themselves while in the process of acquiring further education and developing a career if they should suddenly be faced with the death of their husbands, the loss of earning power, or divorce. A board of trustees will usually, as a matter of largesse or by contract, pay a departing president a year's salary, and not a few presidents are able to return to the classroom, sometimes with provision for this made in the same institution. (The SUNY system in New York State gives every president tenure as a professor somewhere in the system.) But how will a board react to a wife in the case of divorce, or even of widowhood? Nadine Kootheim has written me that in several cases presidents on accepting a position have negotiated what is in effect retirement insurance for both themselves and their spouses. This

seems to me a difficult tactic, which some boards of trustees might interpret as a pre-vision of disloyalty or even of feared incompetence, hardly the proper exuberant mood for a presidential inauguration. Here, again, I would think a go-between would be a preferable person to pursue such a negotiation.

Frederic Ness, Director of the Presidential Search Consultation Service, and former President at Dickinson and Fresno State Colleges, suggested in an interview with Nancy Axelrod that a president typically made his or her best contribution within the span of three or four years (Axelrod, 1982; cf. Ness, 1971). Miriam Wood, on the basis of her study of the relation between presidents and boards of trustees of private liberal arts colleges in the New England and Mid-Atlantic states, concludes that the rhythm of presidential tenure requires several years of on-the-job learning, followed by three or four years of more or less successful leadership (whether of a changed curriculum or a fund drive or some other presumptive legacy), followed in turn by a sense of redundancy on the part of the president and evaporating or declining good will on the part of influential faculty members, so that many presidents think it wise to leave in the sixth or seventh year. (Wood, personal communication.) Correspondingly, perhaps in part responsive to a tendency in the United States to think in terms of decades, many presidents have come to believe that a ten-year span represents about the limit of effectiveness, and a number of formal review processes, operating, for example, at quinquennial intervals, also mark the end of a decade. While in my judgment there is a simple-minded rigidity in such an outlook, as is made evident by the many presidents who have served successfully even in our times for many more than ten years, a decade is likely to find the

president coming to the point in a career where only one more change of position seems feasible. There is no doubt that in a decade or sooner, the partners frequently state that they find the recurrent grievances of faculty members, and also sometimes of students, becoming increasingly wearisome, even though they have found ways of coping with all the perennial issues. They may also feel decreasing support from the trustees.[18] There are the additional factors that, within the last decade or so, faculty unionism has grown, often frustrating efforts to combat mediocrity and raise standards of quality. Similarly, state systems have spread in the public sector, with the presidents of individual campuses frequently caught between the demands of their faculties and staffs and the struggles for limited resources among the state institutions subject to the same authority (Munitz, 1981).

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18. Mrs. Miriam Wood, in the study previously referred to, reports that the presidents she has interviewed find that trustees provide little help in either support or assessment; indeed, assessment, whether on an informal, day-by-day, or sometimes annual basis, or in more formal fashion, only increases opportunities for vindictiveness on the part of faculty or "middle management." Hardly any trustees recognize, let alone diminish, the partners' loneliness. Members of the board who either preferred another candidate or came on the board after the president was chosen frequently believe it is not their obligation either to support the president or to make a serious case for his or her dismissal.

    Mrs. Wood's findings are congruent with a study of search procedures currently being conducted by Mrs. Judith McLaughlin. She has found that those trustees not directly involved as members of the search committee for a new president frequently pay little attention to interim search committee reports sent to the entire board, along with materials on the leading candidates. Hence, when someone has been selected, these relatively indifferent trustees feel no particular sense of obligation to support the person chosen, and are sometimes available to undermine him or her when obvious conflicts arise; some will invite complaints behind the president's back on the part of faculty members and junior administrators. The studies of Wood and McLaughlin are only in their inception, and no hasty over-generalizations should be drawn from these comments, particularly in the light of the very great differences among institutions these researchers and the author of this paper have repeatedly found.

IX

Power, Influence, and Leadership

Because through my work I know presidents and potential presidents, I am sometimes sought out by search committees who send me the job description for a candidate for the presidency of their college or university, and also I read those that appear in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Mostly those who design such statements appear to expect that the person they choose will be their definition of mission. Rare is the announcement, like the recent (1980) one from Dartmouth College, which sets forth three specific missions which are problems of this place and this time, and asks for candidates who are capable of dealing with them--one being the integration of women, another the integration of black students, and the third having to do with that eternal incubus of revising the curriculum.

Meanwhile, the president is caught in another set of political and cultural cross-currents concerning leadership itself. Leadership is both sought and distrusted. As I have already indicated, the president has much less power than many trustees expect him or her to exercise, and than many faculty fear that he or she may exercise. The president has a great influence, especially at a residential campus of moderate size, on the tone of an institution, and he or she may have the opportunity, even in the face of current financial stringencies, to shape particular areas by approving or withholding key appointments. However, many constituencies among faculty and students cannot distinguish formal power represented by voting in councils, assemblies, and committees, from influence based on persuasiveness in person or typescript. They demand formal power in the governance structure, often underestimating the cumulative influence they carry and hence some-

times incline toward cynicism; indeed, their belief that influence through talk, writing, and other forms of persuasion carries no weight tends to become self-confirming. This same blindness to the distinction between power and influence is likely to affect judgments of the spouse, who may be seen by a few as having derivative power, rather than the mutuality of influence that operates in any good marriage. It is seldom understood by trustees or faculty or students that there is no such phenomenon as leadership in the abstract; leadership always exists in a context. There is no single leadership style which will be efficacious with all constituencies on most campuses, or any constituencies on a few. We need to learn more about followership if we are to have a less amorphous sense of different forms of leadership.

This is not to deny that very little can happen in a college or university that does not have support from the top, though the reverse does not hold, and support from the top will not necessarily, as the saying goes, move graveyards. The supporter of the support from the top is the president's spouse, and if the president is without honor in his or her own institution, the spouse is apt to be even more so. To live in that milieu and take advantage of the room for maneuver that does exist requires a combination of humor and modesty, along with a realistic recognition of one's contribution.

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